

I am telling you, that is why when I saw the lack of response, or appropriate response from the FISA court, when they found out that the FBI and the DOJ lied to them, and then kept filing for a warrant every 90 days, basing it back on a lie, those FISA judges should have been outraged. The Chief Justice across the street on our Supreme Court should have been outraged. They weren't. They really didn't do anything.

The State district judges I know and the former Federal district judges I practiced in front of trying cases, I couldn't imagine them not calling a lawyer in and finding them in contempt because it was done in their presence and sending them to jail for 6 months before any criminal prosecution even took place, and then demanding that there be a criminal prosecution. That didn't happen.

So it tells you something about the FISA courts. We learned, I believe it was 2007, that the National Security Letters that give the FBI the ability to just send a letter like a warrant saying, produce all the records you have on this individual, that individual. And, by the way, it is a Federal felony if you tell anybody that you got this letter.

The IG did an inspection and ultimately said, oh, there are probably 3,000 or so National Security Letters that were sent out by the FBI when there was no case, there was no probable cause, they were just doing fishing expeditions. That is unconstitutional. We would have hoped that that got cleaned up, but we had an FBI director named Mueller that kept adding to the problems.

Instead of punishing the FBI agent that fabricated a case against Ted Stevens, a Republican Senator, the one that brought forward the fraud by the FBI, he gets run out of the FBI. The one that was involved in the fraud got a promotion and got a better job. So that tells you even back not long after Mueller took over at the FBI, he was involved in intimidation.

Really, I felt that ever since—we know that William Jefferson was a criminal, committed a crime, and was punished as he should have been. But when the FBI under Mueller made it clear—this is intimidation to Congress—you better not mess with me or counter me or have legitimate oversight over what I am doing, or I may just come search your office. Well, they did. It had never been done before that.

It was all about Members of Congress concerned about what was happening at the FBI, the abuses of our Constitution. So he shoves it right back in our face. It is intimidation. These are gestapo-type tactics.

There was an article that was written in the "Eurasia Review" back on September 1 of this year, and it expressed the concern I have. It is titled "The FBI's Gestapo Tactics: Hallmarks of an Authoritarian Regime."

It talks about, "With every passing day, the United States Government

borrowed yet another leaf from Nazi Germany's playbook: Secret police. Secret courts."

We have FISA, and I am fine if we get rid of them. We had national secrets that were kept before FISA. But the abuses and the lack of concern about the abuses by the judges tell me we need to get rid of them.

It says, "Secret government agencies. Surveillance. Censorship. Intimidation. Harassment. Torture. Brutality. Widespread corruption."

Look, if that power is there and the Republicans take over and put staunch conservatives in there, you know, we still would need very, very stringent oversight, so that nobody did that to the Democrats because when it happens to one side it should concern everybody.

I got really upset when I found out about the abuses of the National Security Letters, and that was under the Bush administration. I was calling it out. I was angry about it. And I am not hearing any Democrats concerned about the abuses of the Constitution that have gone on. The intimidation, borrowing pages directly from the gestapo.

□ 1445

This is how you intimidate people. This is very serious, and I don't have time to go into all of this. It is a good article from the Eurasia Review, but it goes and documents what the Gestapo did and what the FBI is doing, and it is scary.

I hope that if Democrats are not willing to address this issue now then, surely, they will be when we have a Republican administration because the abuse needs to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

DEMOCRATS HAVE DONE GREAT THINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to be able to speak this afternoon from the heart.

Democrats have done great things. We have certainly appreciated the Members of the other side of the aisle who have joined us on some of those. Those things include passing a very effective CHIPS bill that I hope to bring thousands of jobs to my congressional district through the production and manufacturing, using precious metals, in particular, coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We now have families who suffer from diabetes who, shockingly, for the first time in their lives, can have insulin capped at \$35. I am glad to have been a part of that.

I seek, as I did before, that Medicaid recipients can also have their insulin capped.

I am glad that working families, in this storm of inflation, can, through the Biden administration and Congress, have subsidies for healthcare and get cheaper healthcare.

I am glad that the flooding that is so intensive in places like Houston, can, in fact, now have the bipartisan infrastructure bill; and isolated communities without transportation or transit can, in fact, now have the potential of billions of dollars coming to those rural and urban centers, inner-city centers that need an infrastructure rebuild.

We need clean water, and Flint and Jackson, Mississippi, should not be the norm in the United States of America; and lead in pipes that helped destroy the cognitive genius of our children should not exist.

We have done great things. And as we go to work in our districts, listen to our constituents even more than we do when we have a moment over the weekends that we go home, we go home to hold in our hands the destiny of democracy when we fight for re-election for the purpose of ensuring the value of this Nation, as I look, In God We Trust.

We have done great things. Families of America should know that this leadership, under NANCY PELOSI, and STENY HOYER, and JIM CLYBURN, and the chair, Mr. JEFFRIES, and the vice chair of the Democratic Caucus, we should all know that there have been good things that were done.

So, when I go home, I have no hesitancy to be able to go and to champion the lives we have saved; the veterans who will get answers to their questions and their health conditions; the people who suffered under the burn pit, now relief, they celebrated because of this Congress, this Democratic Congress, with our friends who wanted to do what is right.

We have given hope to those burn pit victims. They can't breathe, and we have finally given relief.

This body has determined that the electoral count should be accurate, with no false electors showing up, giving false representation that they represent the States. No Vice President can do anything but ministerial.

There will be no doubt that if you vote in a Presidential election fairly and electors are selected to cast their vote for you—something, of course, that I think is a figment of our past and should not be in place, but let's make it perfect—you can now trust that the electors will do right, as they did in 2020; and they provided the final vote under the Vice Presidency of Mr. PENCE that elected Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS.

We pray to God that we will never see January 6 again; never again; never the violence and brutality, the bloodshed of our police officers, the deaths that occurred, the innocent lives lost. We hope never again.

We have done some good things. There is such a litany of them, I cannot list them all.

I am delighted to have passed the Stop Human Trafficking in School Zones, the legislation that I authored; that we have fixed the Terry fix, to ensure justice for those who were not able to come appropriately under the reduction of sentencing dealing with crack and cocaine.

I am glad to have been able to push the Victims of Crime Act to ensure better handling of victims of crime.

At the same time, I believe that it is important to assure that the American people know that we are, in fact, working hard for them. So the many amendments to help HBCUs that I have offered; the many important elements of the appropriations, including more dollars for post-traumatic stress under the NDAA and some aspects of the appropriations, as I do every year; the helping of those suffering from triple negative breast cancer; and working to ensure that the lives of our children are better by helping to create resources for safer schools; work still unfinished to get our storage laws in place; to ban assault weapons.

But we have done a great thing in passing legislation to break the cycle of violence led by Mr. HORSFORD; and to utilize the tools that have been given through this Congress, under the Democratic leadership, to make lives better for all Americans.

We have done some good things. As we have done some good things, there is more work to be done. I want to make sure that we see the passage of the voting rights, so that oppression of voting can cease and desist.

It is appalling that we go into this election, but we fought, as Democrats, to make it happen. I am so sorry the noes came from the other side of the aisle.

I thank my colleagues, 217-plus, who have, in fact, supported the idea of a commission to study slavery and to look seriously and thoroughly at the question of reparation proposals. I know that we will work together going forward. It is the heart of America to cure both racism and to heal and to bring people together. I have confidence. I feel well about our opportunities.

I thank the Speaker that is in the chair, to have joined me in the midst of the crisis of reproductive freedom being taken away, to support medical personnel who, right now, under the laws of the Dobbs case in America, are being arrested, could be, nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, who are simply trying to help a desperate woman that has been raped, or a child that has been raped. I hope to pass that Protecting the Medical Personnel of America bill.

I hope to pass the legislation that I introduced to stop the stalkers who would get a bounty on women by watching what they do, calling up and saying, I think she is getting an abortion. She is over at this address; and receiving \$10,000.

Can you believe it? The law of the land in the State of Texas.

We have done some good things and we are doing good things. But if this Special Order is about one issue or item, this is what I want it to be about. I want it to be about something that our psyche is just not used to.

I don't know how many times we have thought of the tens upon tens of Americans that are held hostage around the world. We learned a little bit about MIAs, people missing in action, soldiers missing in action, really, through the Vietnam War. I know they were missing in action in World War II and other wars, but in this recent generation, we learned about it because the late heroic John McCain would always remind us of the MIAs.

I joined with my colleague, Ben Reyes, and put a flag out in front of the City Hall in Houston, Texas, when I was a member of the City Council; the first MIA flag, I believe, maybe, in city councils across America.

I came here to the United States Congress, and outside my door is the flag of MIAs. We understand that.

But do we understand about Americans who have done little, have been plucked off the streets of places that are despotic, and joined the thousands of their own citizens thrown in jail with no real justice system?

So if I come to you today, I want the title of this Special Order to focus us on where we need to go.

THE PLIGHT OF BRITTNEY GRINER

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, when I mention Brittney Griner, I want everybody to know I am thinking of Paul Whelan, and I am thinking of the journalist in Iran, and hostages around the world, U.S. citizens.

Does anybody know that we work hard on this? When I say we, the administration works hard on this every day. On the floor today, I asked for more resources for the hostage finding team—I will just call them that.

But I want to take a moment to just show you Brittney Griner's life. She is a Houstonian; went to the schools, the public schools in the area; went to Nimitz High School in my congressional district. I met some of her classmates. Even the students there today want to do something to show their care and outrage about where she is today.

Brittney Griner, no, she was not in the United States military. I honor them. But she wore the uniform. She was an Olympian; brought a gold medal home to the United States, I believe, two Olympics, back to back. That is USA Number 42 and Number 15, numbers worn in the Olympics.

□ 1500

That is Brittney Griner sharing some good news, a good dunk maybe, with her teammates, and Brittney Griner, an Olympian, wearing that good-looking Gold Medal. We like that because everybody watches the Olympics.

What an unbelievable basketball player—that is a shot; I could only dream about that shot—Brittney

Griner, an American, African-American young woman.

I know the Baylorites love the championships and the hard playing that she did for them at Baylor University. That is Brittney Griner. She had a life in front of her.

Because of the very poor compensation, of sorts, compared to the NBA, many women WNBA players go off to foreign countries to play. She got drafted by Phoenix and played stupendously, so many world records in basketball as a professional.

Big heart, Brittney Griner, her teammates loved her.

I visited the Phoenix arena where her team plays. Of course, Brittney Griner's locker was there waiting for her to come back.

This looks like an exciting time, some good-looking pictures of our fellow American.

Paul Whelan, a marine, had some good days serving his country.

It is just an innocent civilian, who the infractions of what she is charged with wind up suggesting and threatening and charging her as a drug trafficker, a big-time drug trafficker—no sense but nonsense.

She could have been released and directed back to the United States. But no, this is what Mr. Putin wanted to do. He felt, after the Olympics of 2022, the Winter Olympics, where his teams were embarrassed because of drugs, that he would show the United States.

Here she is. They put her in a cage, 6 feet 9 inches in a cage. The beauty of her size was to recognize such a talented person playing the sport, doing well, giving joy to the fans and getting Americans to cheer her on during the Olympics.

This is what they wanted to show Americans: We got you now. In your eye.

A young woman longs to be home, deserves to be home, with other hostages who have been brutally treated.

President Biden has indicated, as Commander in Chief, that he wants all the hostages home, and he is ready to speak to Mr. Putin if he would only have a heart, if he would only recognize that there is no justice in his injustice.

Ninety-nine percent of those who go to trial in Russia are convicted. They are, in fact, held hostage. This is a direct result of Putin's interest in saying to the United States, I guess: We got you.

Not respecting she has family, not respecting that she has done nothing wrong.

Brittney is an extension of us in Houston. She represents the quintessential American stories and qualities. She is suffering after going through a trial, the process of appeal, doing everything, offering doctors' statements as to why certain items were with her, indicating a mistake, doing everything told by her lawyers. Nothing. Denial of basic rights to Brittney Griner, because they are the

rights to which we believe all people are entitled, a trial by jury of your peers and the right to be able to be proven innocent.

We do not accept the dehumanization that is commonplace in Russia, and our values compel us to seek justice for Brittney's immediate release and return to her family and friends.

She spoke eloquently by saying: I am sorry. It was a mistake.

It seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Can it be nothing more than an attempt to humiliate her, her family, her loved ones, who cry out for the potential of what may happen?

She cried out to the President of the United States: I fear that I may be here for the rest of my life.

She is a young woman who gives away shoes and items to children without.

Her basic rights—we as Americans cannot just go quietly. We have a lot on our plate, but the only lifeline they have is the United States of America.

As a mother who has watched my children grow up, proud to see them excel, I can only imagine the gut-wrenching pain of her mother and father and her wife, and how hopeless they feel. There is no worse feeling than when someone in your family is in imminent danger and beyond your reach to help.

As a Black woman, I can say there is no greater fear through the history of our time, through slavery, through discrimination, through unequal treatment that we face in a justice system, even here, to think that there is nothing we can grab at to be able to give the defense, the explanation.

I want Americans to think of the pain of losing their children to something that is so foreign to us. They are alive, but they are held hostage.

There is much pain in this country. I have seen it through gun violence, so I don't speak to the pain of those mothers and fathers. What I speak to is that we need to do something about it.

I have gone to the Russian consulate in Houston. I have gone to the Russian Embassy. I have looked the Ambassador in the eye, at a huge, gigantic complex, and I said: Send this message to Mr. Putin. Let Brittney go. Let Paul Whelan go. Let the people of Russia, the good people who are out fighting against this vile and vicious war against Ukraine, let them go, too.

But I can't leave silently to go back to Houston without coming to this floor and saying, since February, about 2 weeks after the Olympics, she has been held.

She is not a soldier. She had nothing to do with any government activities. The only reason I say that is because her training does not lend her to these dastardly conditions, a cage, inhumane cage, ultimately to go to a labor camp where Trevor Reed suffered and Paul Whelan suffered.

She has been denied access to consular officials, and she was dependent upon Russian lawyers who mean well

but simply go into the court and watch their client be convicted.

As they faked elections just the last couple of days, Brittney Griner is suffering from Putin's demonstration of power and control that stems from centuries of bigotry and hatred embodied in an autocratic leader who is the very antithesis of everything Ms. Griner represents.

If you want to know why she is incarcerated and not released, it is based upon her country of origin, something she cannot help.

Americans who are blessed to be born under this flag cannot help the values upon which we stand. We cannot help our Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. We cannot help our national anthem that calls for victory, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

We cannot help that we are called by nations to defend them. We cannot help that we have the freedom to travel and that we welcome people to this country, Russian students, Russian players, even on the space station. That is America.

But now we find the dastardly acts of stealing land, calling it an election, fighting people who want to be free, Ukrainians. In the midst of this turmoil is a young woman who graduated in my district from Nimitz High School, a Baylor University graduate, a two-time Olympian, and, of course, with all her friends in Phoenix, and just a basic human being.

I hope I made it clear. There are two teams in Phoenix. She is with the Phoenix Mercury, the WNBA team.

I couldn't leave this day without reminding America that if in God we trust, give some hope to these people, lonely, all over the world, shocked that they were snatched off the streets or snatched from an airport, gave every explanation. They created no outrageous, vile, terroristic act. They did nothing with guns, drugs of any amount. They were no detriment to anybody in that land, and here they are.

My colleagues, Congressmen STANTON and ALLRED, supported H. Res. 1132, led by Congressman STANTON out of Phoenix, calling for the immediate release of Brittney Griner.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article from Sports Illustrated: "Brittney Griner's Wife Has Troubling Update On How She's Doing."

[From the Spun, by Sports Illustrated, Sept. 17, 2022]

BRITNEY GRINER'S WIFE HAS TROUBLING UPDATE ON HOW SHE'S DOING

(By Andrew McCarty)

Earlier this week, President Joe Biden met with Cherelle Griner, the wife of imprisoned WNBA star Brittney Griner.

Griner has been in a Russian prison since February, when she was arrested for having cannabis oil in her bag at a Russian airport. Ever since then, the United States has been trying to get her home.

A meeting between Biden and Cherelle is a big step towards that, but it also came with some troubling news. According to Cherelle,

Brittney's letters to her have taken an increasingly dark tone.

Cherelle offered a larger statement following her meeting with Biden.

"I've felt every minute of the grueling seven months without her," she said. "I look forward to the day my wife is back home. As my family and I continue on this journey, I'd like to thank the broad coalition of friends, leaders and supporters who continue to stand with us and advocate for Brittney's swift and safe return. Let's share a unified commitment to bringing all Americans home to their families and loved ones. Together We Are BG."

Hopefully the United States and Russia can work together to bring Griner home in the near future.

Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD two articles from CNN, one titled "Biden set to meet with families of Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan at the White House" and an article written most recently about Brittney Griner's conditions that she is facing and what she thinks is going to happen to her life.

[From CNN, Sept. 16, 2022]

BIDEN SET TO MEET WITH FAMILIES OF BRITNEY GRINER AND PAUL WHELAN AT THE WHITE HOUSE

President Joe Biden is scheduled to meet with the families of Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan at the White House on Friday, marking his first time personally meeting with them since their loved ones were detained in Russia.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Thursday that Biden will meet with Griner's wife, Cherelle Griner, and Whelan's sister, Elizabeth Whelan, to assure them his administration is committed to securing the release of their loved ones and that they remain "front of mind." Biden will meet with them separately, an official said.

"One of the things that the President wanted to make clear is, and one of the reasons he's meeting with the families, is that he wanted to let them know that they remain front of mind and that his team is working on this every day, on making sure that Brittney and Paul return home safely," Jean-Pierre said.

The Biden administration has repeatedly said that working to secure Griner and Whelan's release, as well as that of Americans wrongfully detained abroad, is a top priority. In late July, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the US had put forward a "substantial proposal" to try to secure the release of Griner and Whelan. Sources told CNN that proposal included a swap for convicted arms dealer Viktor Bout.

Griner was detained in February for carrying vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage. The two-time US Olympic basketball gold medalist pleaded guilty to drug charges and said she accidentally packed the drugs while in a hurry. She has been sentenced to nine years, along with a fine of about \$16,400. Her legal team in Russia has appealed the sentence.

Whelan has been imprisoned in Russia for more than three years after being convicted on espionage charges that he vehemently denies. He was sentenced in June 2020 to 16 years in prison in a trial US officials denounced as unfair.

A senior administration official told CNN Thursday that there has been "movement but not breakthrough" on the efforts to secure the releases of Griner and Whelan. The official said that the US has urged Russia to put forward "a serious counteroffer" to the proposal on the table to secure the release of the two, but "we've not gotten a serious response back."

State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Thursday that “there have been discussions with the Russian government,” but acknowledged the negotiations process “certainly hasn’t moved with the speed we would like.” He said he wouldn’t call the process “stalled.”

The White House meetings come after CNN first reported earlier this week that former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and his team were in Moscow and held meetings with Russian leadership.

The details around those meetings were not immediately clear. Richardson and his namesake center privately work on behalf of families of hostages and detainees.

Biden administration officials have repeatedly expressed concerns that private citizens’ attempts to broker deals to repatriate wrongfully detained Americans may end up hindering ongoing efforts by the US government to bring them home.

Since taking office, Biden has met with the families of other Americans who have been detained abroad.

The President in May met with the family of Austin Tice, an American journalist detained at a checkpoint near Damascus in August 2012. The Biden administration relayed in August that it has engaged directly with the Syrian government to try and bring Tice home.

Biden also met with the family of Trevor Reed in March. Reed, an American citizen and former Marine who had been detained in Russia since 2019, was freed and repatriated to the US in April as part of a prisoner swap.

[From CNN, March 17, 2022]

WHAT WE KNOW (AND DONT KNOW) ABOUT THE ARREST OF US OLYMPIC CHAMPION BRITNEY GRINER IN RUSSIA

(By Holly Yan)

A month after US basketball star Brittney Griner was arrested in Russia, it’s still not clear exactly where she’s being held.

But a Moscow court has ordered the 31-year-old to stay in custody until at least May 19, the Russian state news agency TASS reported March 17.

“The court granted the request of the investigation and extended the period of detention of the US citizen Griner until May 19,” the court said, according to TASS.

Griner is a championship-winning player with the WNBA’s Phoenix Mercury who has spent her past several offseasons playing for the Russian team UMMC Ekaterinburg.

But last month, Russian authorities accused Griner of smuggling significant amounts of a narcotic substance after flying from New York to a Moscow airport.

Now, the mystery surrounding her detainment in a country she’s worked in for years has come to symbolize the growing tensions between the US and Russia during Russia’s continued invasion of Ukraine.

Why was Griner detained?

The Russian Federal Customs Service said an American was detained at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo Airport after being found with hash oil.

“As a US citizen was passing through the green channel at Sheremetyevo Airport upon arriving from New York, a working dog from the Sheremetyevo customs canine department detected the possible presence of narcotic substances in the accompanying luggage,” a statement from the customs service said.

“The customs inspection of the hand luggage being carried by the US citizen confirmed the presence of vapors with specifically smelling liquid, and an expert determined that the liquid was cannabis oil (hash oil), which is a narcotic substance.”

The Russian statement did not identify Griner by name, but said the detainee is an American professional basketball player and two-time US Olympian.

The customs agency said the US citizen was placed in pretrial detention. It said a criminal case was underway for smuggling significant amounts of narcotic substances—an offense carries a potential punishment of five to 10 years in prison.

Griner’s wife, Cherelle Griner, has publicly called for the release of her wife. USA Basketball, the Women’s National Basketball Association, the Phoenix Mercury and the WNBA players’ union have all publicly shared their concerns for Griner.

When was Griner arrested?

The Russian customs agency said in a statement a US citizen was detained “in February of 2022,” after flying to Moscow from New York, but did not say what day.

US Rep. Colin Allred, whose office has been in touch with the US State Department, said Griner was arrested in Russia on February 17.

A State Department spokesperson said the department is “aware of and closely engaged on this case.”

Where is Griner now?

As of March 17, Griner’s exact whereabouts were not clear.

Ekaterina Kalugina, a representative of Moscow’s Public Monitoring Commission—which observes the treatment of prisoners—visited Griner at her pre-trial detention center, TASS reported.

A court advocate said Griner should be kept under house arrest because their jail beds are a foot too short for Griner, who is 6 feet 9 inches tall, according to the Russian news service RIA Novosti.

Can Griner communicate with anyone in the US?

Allred said Griner has been in contact with her Russian lawyer, who is in touch with her agent and her family in the US. But Griner’s consular service has been blocked, which is “extremely concerning,” Allred said.

TASS quoted Kalugina as saying the US consul had not yet visited Griner, despite Russian authorities’ willingness to “create all conditions” for their visit.

CNN has reached out to Russian officials and the US Embassy in Moscow for comment on Griner’s consular access but has not heard back.

Although a State Department official told CNN the US has been denied consular access to Griner, a source close to the situation told CNN Griner’s Russian legal team has seen her several times a week throughout her detention, and she is well.

The source added that the Russian investigation is ongoing, and a trial date has not been set.

Her high school basketball coach, Debbie Jackson, said she worries Griner’s case will be used for political purposes.

“My biggest fear is that . . . she will become a political pawn,” Jackson told CNN.

What was Griner doing in Russia?

“Griner was in Russia for work: playing for UMMC Ekaterinburg, where in 2021 she helped the team win its fifth EuroLeague Women championship,” wrote Tamryn Spruill, a journalist who covers women’s basketball.

Spruill started the “Secure Brittney Griner’s Swift and Safe Return to the U.S.” petition on Change.org.

“Like many athletes competing in the WNBA, Griner plays abroad during the WNBA offseason because her salary is exponentially higher in other countries,” Spruill wrote on the petition’s page.

“For WNBA players, that means playing abroad, while NBA rookies who haven’t

played a professional game yet are handed salaries many-times higher than what title-winning, All-Star designated WNBA veterans could ever hope for,” Spruill said.

“These realities are not the fault of the players. They simply want to be paid their worth like their male counterparts, and they do not deserve to be entangled in geopolitical turmoil for doing so.”

Are there any other WNBA players in Russia?

In early March, the WNBA confirmed to CNN that no other players were in Russia nor Ukraine.

What are the odds of getting Griner out of Russia?

A member of the US House Armed Services Committee said “it’s going to be very difficult” to get Griner out of Russia.

“Our diplomatic relationships with Russia are nonexistent at the moment,” Democratic Rep. John Garamendi of California told CNN on March 7.

“Perhaps during the various negotiations that may take place, she might be able to be one of the solutions. I don’t know.”

He also noted “Russia has some very, very strict LGBT rules and laws”—though it’s not clear whether those rules and laws might impact Griner’s case.

Russia has passed LGBTQ-related legislation and outlawed the “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations around minors.”

But the Biden administration is working on trying to get Griner out of Russia, members of the Congressional Black Caucus said after meeting with President Joe Biden on March 7.

“The best news we got today was that they know about it and that she’s on the agenda,” Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, who represents Griner’s hometown of Houston, Texas, told reporters.

Noting a potential 10-year sentence for Griner, Jackson Lee added: “We know about Brittney Griner, and we know that we have to move on her situation.”

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a press statement from my office.

[Press Statement from Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Aug. 4, 2022]

WASHINGTON, DC.—Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee condemns the Russian Court System for their egregious sentencing of Brittney Griner. Today Griner was sentenced to nine years in prison by a Russian Court. This decision comes after the House passage of H. Res. 1132 “Calling for the immediate release of Brittney Griner, a citizen of the United States, who was wrongfully detained by the Government of the Russian Federation in February 2022.”

“If I have to beg for mercy for the release of Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan myself, I am prepared to do so,” explained Rep. Jackson Lee. Brittney Griner grew up in Houston, Texas, was a collegiate All American star basketball player at Baylor University where she won a national championship, won two Olympic gold medals as the leader of the U.S. national basketball team, and is a WNBA superstar playing for the Phoenix Mercury based in Arizona. Prior to being held captive by the Russian government for several months before having charges brought against her Griner played in the Russian leagues in the United States’ WNBA off season.

On May 3, 2022, the United States Government declared Brittney Griner unlawfully detained and immediately moved her case to the Department of State under hostage negotiation. The U.S. Department of state is a leading Government agency which serves an

integral role in foreign policy and the advancement of the American people. “We thought there might be a glimmer of hope, but we were obviously wrong,” Congresswoman Jackson Lee explained.

While on trial Alexander Boikov, a member of Griner’s legal team, requested Griner’s acquittal stating that the prosecution failed to prove criminal intent. Charges brought against Griner are drug smuggling and cannabis possession, which the prosecution has categorized as a significant amount. Griner was in possession of less than one ounce of cannabis oil, which demonstrates how corrupt Russia’s court system is. By padding smuggling charges, Russian courts were able to lengthen Griner’s sentence when evidence only substantiated drug possession charges.

While playing for the Phoenix Mercury in Arizona, Griner legally obtained and frequently used cannabis to treat chronic pain from an injury. Griner took her career in the Russian basketball league seriously and decided to travel to Russia, even amidst the political unrest, so she would not let her teammates or Russian fanbase down.

The Biden administration has offered the trade of Russian illegal arms dealer Viktor Bout for the trade of both Griner and Whelan. Congresswoman Jackson Lee urges Russia to act on this deal and reassures the American people “We are not violating our integrity as Viktor Bout has served majority of his sentence.” Bout, nicknamed “the merchant of death,” was convicted on November 2, 2011, and sentenced, to twenty-five years in prison on charges of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and officials, and conspiring to provide aid to a terrorist organization. Inversely, Griner is currently imprisoned on charges for 0.702 ounces of cannabis oil and serving a nine-year sentence. “The American people must come together, and ensure our citizens are brought home,” explained Rep. Jackson Lee.

□ 1515

And so, Mr. Speaker, let me express my appreciation to my colleagues. I hope they see the pain that her family is feeling. None of us can stand in their shoes.

Because none of us can stand in their shoes, we have to plead to Vladimir Putin. Let our important and crucial leaders listen to this plea. Listen to our anguish. Listen and see this picture versus the ones that I have shown, this picture. Just look at them. From Olympian to a cage. The Olympian to a cage.

I am going to do everything I can.

I have asked the Embassy, and I want to know what kind of shame they are experiencing, not giving Americans visas for us to go to our embassy in Moscow?

What are they thinking that they can live in a world like this, locking people up so they can play gotcha and be inhumane and stick it in the eye of the American people?

Well, I will tell you, as I stand here today, let me take this fist, this fist, to make the promise that all of our hostages should be free. I hope the State Department’s team of hostage negotiators gets the additional funding to grow the team.

But to the families of hostages who are in pain, some who don’t know whether their loved one is alive, and they live with the pain every day that

they have not been able to honor them if they are not.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I have said something to ignite the conscience of the American people and to ignite the conscience, if you will, of all of my colleagues.

Free Brittney Griner now.

Free Paul Whelan.

Free Brittney Griner now.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule by which the House has passed H. Res. 1132, “Calling for the immediate release of Brittney Griner”.

A very important component of the rule currently before the House is that it: “Provides that House Resolution 1132 is hereby adopted.”

I fought hard for passage of H. Res. 1132, introduced by Congressman STANTON, myself, and Congressman ALLRED, because, by raising our voices for Brittney Griner, we raise our voices for bedrock American values and priorities that are intrinsic to our national character.

H. Res. 1132 calls for the release of Brittney Griner and, in so doing, puts Congress on record emphatically defending true American values such as our devotion to human rights, respect and dignity for each person, the right to due process, and justice based on truth.

Each of these have been offended by Russia unjustifiably holding Griner, and by the Russian distortion of a judicial system that extends her detention, preventing her release to return home, without a factual or legal basis for doing so.

Brittney Griner, who grew up in Houston, Texas, is an extension of all of us. She represents quintessential American stories and qualities. The injustices inflicted upon her by Putin and his acolytes in Russia could have been imposed on any Americans within their reach.

The denial of basic rights from Brittney offends all Americans because they are rights to which we believe all people are entitled. We do not accept the dehumanization that is commonplace in Russia, and our values compel us to seek justice for Brittney, her immediate release, and her return home to her family and friends.

As a mother who has raised a family, I can only imagine the gut-wrenching pain that her parents, family, and friends must be feeling right now. There is no worse feeling than when someone in your family is in imminent danger and they are beyond your reach to help them.

As a Black woman, I can say there’s no greater fear than having a loved one being wrongfully placed in a situation or environment over which there is no control.

For any of us, if we had a loved one placed in this situation, we would be doing everything in our power to ensure their prompt and safe return.

We would be calling and seeking the help of everyone possible—including the media, the US State Department, and even allies in Russia.

We would press every politician and public figure to fight against the corrupt government of Russia to ensure that our family member is guaranteed their natural born rights to due process, a fair trial, and a prompt release from detention.

No American citizen should be detained in a foreign country for months, denied access to

American consular officials, and, dependent upon the performance of a Russian lawyer, especially in absence of substantial evidence of a crime.

Ms. Griner is suffering from Russia’s heinous demonstration of power and control that stems from centuries of bigotry and hatred embodied in an autocratic leader who is the very antithesis of everything Ms. Griner represents.

Ms. Griner’s detention is primarily based on the country of her citizenship, in a game of political leverage. Since she was targeted because of being an American, every American should take this personally. Her detention is an offense against our country, and against our people.

Griner was detained on February 17, 2022, her initial release date was set to be May 19th, it was then shifted to June 19th, and when that date approached, it was delayed to July 2nd.

That is not justice—it’s oppression. We call on Putin and the Russian government to comply with their international treaty obligations.

By passing the rule and adopting H. Res. 1132, the House insists, alongside the Griner family, that Brittney Griner must be immediately and safely released and returned home to the US.

We are unified in demanding respectful treatment and justice for her, in accordance with American values.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly an enrolled bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 6833. An act making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.

Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the House, further reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker pro tempore, Mr. Beyer:

H.R. 4877. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman to create a centralized website for compliance guides, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7698. An act to designate the outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Ventura, California, as the “Captain Rosemary Bryant Mariner Outpatient Clinic”.

Examined and found truly enrolled September 29, 2022.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker pro tempore, Mr. BEYER, announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 4791.—An act to amend section 301 of title 44, United States Code, to establish a term for the appointment of the Director of the Government Publishing Office.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 1 of House Resolution